

# Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District  
Ranking Democratic Member, House Small Business Committee



## Velázquez Bill Helps Welfare Families

Proposal would keep parents with children from being thrown off rolls

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez last month introduced legislation to reform the welfare laws that are now beginning to eliminate families from City welfare rolls, right in the aftermath of September 11, a deepening recession, and major job losses.

The 1996 Welform Reform Act mandated that families could receive federal assistance for no more than five years during a lifetime. It also revoked the rights of legal immigrants to receive welfare, even though their taxes support it.

December 1, 2001 was the five-year deadline that dropped 38,000 New York families from welfare.

The "Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Recipients Lifeline Act" would repeal the five-year limit on benefits, repeal restrictions on legal immigrants, require bilingual services and adjust aid for inflation.

"We cannot leave families with so little help at this time," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "We must act now."



Congresswoman Velázquez held a rally with FUREE and Make the Road By Walking to introduce her welfare reform bill with families facing the end of their benefits.

## School Highlights High-Tech Education

Grant trains Bushwick students in graphic communications



Congresswoman Velázquez talks to Gloria Rivera, a student in the Docutech Xerox training program at Bushwick High School.

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez joined Assemblyman Darryl Towns last month to meet with students in a new graphic communications training program at Bushwick High School. The training program in "Docutech" operations leads successful graduates to certification by the Xerox Corporation.

This is the first adult vocational training offered at the high school and will help create a pathway for local residents into the graphic arts industry.

Docutech equipment is a photocopying system that integrates a wide variety of graphics production operations, including receiving digital images over the Internet. There is great demand for Docutech operators, who can earn from \$18 to \$22 per hour when certified by Xerox.

Funding comes from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, obtained with the support of Congresswoman Velázquez. The program is managed by the New York Industrial Retention Network, a citywide economic development organization.

# Major Education Bill Now Law

Provides more resources, requires more school accountability

President Bush signed into law the biggest changes in federal education policy in 40 years last month, requiring more accountability while providing more resources for public schools to teach our young people.

The new law includes an amendment by Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez to allow schools to use “in-kind” donations of time and materials to qualify for after-school program federal matching funds.

The new law requires yearly testing in reading and math for every child in grade 3-8 beginning in 2005, with the goal of improving all students’ reading and math skills within 12 years and narrowing the performance gap between wealthy and low-income schools.

The law also requires schools to certify their teachers are qualified in their subject areas. If test scores do not improve, low-income students can transfer to other schools or receive tutoring.

Finally, the law lets Congress spend \$26.5 billion on public education and increases spending for the main program helping low-income schoolchildren.

“Everyone knows education is important for our



Congresswoman Velázquez meets with schoolchildren during a visit to P.S. 145 last month.

children,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “These new changes will help all students to achieve their potential.”

# Velázquez Introduces Federal Retiree Law

Indexes savings for inflation, allows widowed spouses to get benefits

Last month Congresswoman Velázquez introduced a bill to reform parts of the federal employees retirement system.

The “Deferred Annuitant Fairness Act” would index for inflation money put away by government workers for their retirement, so it holds its value when they become eligible for the benefit at age 62. It would also require that the spouses of federal workers who die before reaching retirement are

allowed to receive the benefit themselves.

Currently, funds put away for retirement are not indexed for inflation. That means \$1,000 put away today will remain \$1,000 30 years from

now, except that inflation has decreased its value three decades later, when it will be worth about \$400. That discourages workers from keeping money in the system, and punishes those who do.

Also, under the old Civil Service Retirement System, spouses of federal workers who die before retirement age cannot receive the benefit. Congresswoman Velázquez’s bill would change that, allowing the widowed spouse to collect the worker’s retirement benefit.

“It is important to treat everyone fairly,” Congresswoman Velázquez said.



## Grants Awarded to Our Community

All Saints School.....\$11,561	Beikvei Hatzoin.....\$22,307
E-rate Internet connections	E-rate Internet connections
Blessed Sacrament School.....\$23,913	Most Holy Trinity School.....\$31,282
E-rate Internet connections	E-rate Internet connections
St. Nicolas Elementary.....\$46,762	St. Rita School.....\$63,634
E-rate Internet connections	E-rate Internet connections
St. Vincent de Paul School.....\$46,980	St. John the Baptist School.....\$52,789
E-rate Internet connections	E-rate Internet connections
United Talmudical Academy.....\$137,071	Yeshiva Gedoloh Ohr Yiroel.....\$243,719
E-rate Internet connections	E-rate Internet connections